

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

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R 181643Z MAR 74

FM AMEMBASSY MADRID

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8433

INFO AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY LISBON

C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 1774

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, SOCI, SP, VT

SUBJECT: FIRST ROUND OF CHURCH STATE CRISIS APPEARS TO END

REF MADRID 1642

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. LATEST DEVELOPMENT IN ANOVEROS CASE WAS MODERATE AND BRIEF STATEMENT BY INFORMATION MINISTER AFTER LAST CABINET MEETING IN WHICH HE SAID GOVERNMENT RECOGNIZED INADEQUACY OF SYSTEM REGULATING CHURCH-STATE RELATIONS AND CALLING FOR RENEWED CONCORDAT NEGOTIATIONS ON URGENT BASIS. ANOVEROS CASE APPEARS DEFUSED FOR TIME BEING AND ANOVEROS IS CURRENTLY ON "VACATION" IN MALAGA. THUS ROUND ONE OF CURRENT CONTINUING CHURCH-STATE CRISIS HAS ENDED. END SUMMARY.

2. ON MAR 12, BISHOP ANOVEROS RETURNED, ACCOMPANIED BY VICAR GENERAL MSGR. UBIETA, TO BILBAO, AFTER THE TWO HAD SPENT FIVE DAYS IN MADRID ATTENDING THE EXTRAORDINARY SESSIONS OF THE PERMANENT COMMITTEE OF THE SPANISH BISHOPS CONFERENCE (REF). ON MAR 14 ANOVEROS LEFT BILBAO FOR A "VACATION" AND REST, ARRIVING IN MALAGA THE FOLLOWING DAY WHERE HE REPORTEDLY IS AT PRESENT. MSGR. UBIETA HAS ALSO REPORTEDLY DEPARTED ON "VACATION".

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3. ON MAR 13, MSGR ACERBI, ASSISTANT TO THE VATICAN'S ARCHBISHOP CASAROLI, RETURNED TO ROME AFTER A 2 DAY STAY IN

MADRID DURING WHICH HE HAD ATTENDED THE FINAL SESSIONS OF THE PERMANENT COMMITTEE OF THE EPISCOPATE AND ALSO CALLED ON FOREIGN MINISTER CORTINA.

4. THE GOVT'S EXPECTED REPLY TO THE MAR 9 STATEMENT OF THE EPISCOPATE (REF) REGARDING THE ANOVEROS CASE, CAME IN THE FORM OF A BRIEF STATEMENT GIVEN BY INFORMATION MINISTER CABANILLAS TO THE PRESS FOLLOWING MAR 15 CABINET MEETING. THE STATEMENT CLAIMED LATEST CHURCH-STATE DEVELOPMENTS HAD DEMONSTRATED THAT EXISTING SYSTEM WAS NEITHER ADEQUATE NOR BASED ON TODAY'S REALITIES AND THAT A NEW APPROACH WAS URGENTLY REQUIRED. IT ADDED THAT THEREFORE GOVT HAD DECIDED TO SEEK, WITHOUT PAUSE, TO CLARIFY THE RELATIONS BETWEEN CHURCH AND STATE WITH A FRAMEWORK OF "COLLABORATION AND MUTUAL INDEPENDENCE".

5. COMMENT. CABANILLAS' BRIEF AND CONCILIATORY STATEMENT WILL SERVE TO FURTHER DEFUSE THE SITUATION. IT IS OBVIOUS THAT GOVT HAS NOW CHOSEN THE COURSE OF DOWNPLAYING, FOR MOMENT, ANOVEROS CASE ITSELF, AND OF ADDRESSING LARGER AND MORE FUNDAMENTAL ISSUE OF CHURCH-STATE RELATIONS AND CONCORDAT. MOST SIGNIFICANT ASPECT OF INFORMATION MINISTER'S STATEMENT IS ACKNOWLEDGEMENT THAT EXISTING SYSTEM AND CONCORDAT ARE NO LONGER ADEQUATE AND THAT A NEW ARRANGEMENT, POSSIBLY A NEW CONCORDAT OR MORE LIKELY PARTIAL ACCORDS, SHOULD BE NEGOTIATED ON RATHER URGENT BASIS. THIS IS SOMETHING OF A POLICY REVERSAL SINCE HERETOFORE IT WAS MAINLY CHURCH WHICH KEPT CLAIMING 1953 CONCORDAT WAS NO LONGER IN TUNE WITH REALITY, WHILE SPANISH STATE WAS RELATIVELY SATISFIED WITH CONCORDAT.

6. RE ANOVEROS HIMSELF, IT IS NOT KNOWN HOW LONG HE (AS WELL AS HIS VICAR-GENERAL) WILL REMAIN ON "VACATION" OR WHETHER IT MIGHT NOT BE OF INDEFINITE DURATION. SITUATION IS STILL INFLAMABLE, AS ANOVEROS IS NOW SOMETHING OF HERO-MARTYR TO BASQUE CLERGY. SHOULD ANOVEROS NOT RETURN TO BILBAO AFTER A REASONABLE PERIOD OF TIME ON VACATION, HIS PROLONGED AND CONTINUED ABSENCE MAY CAUSE FURTHER PROBLEMS AND COMPLICATION IN BASQUE COUNTRY. HIS "VACATION" THEREFORE MAY MERELY HAVE BROUGHT ADDITIONAL TIME FOR BOTH GOVT AND CHURCH IN WHICH TO DECIDE HIS FATE. THERE ARE RUMORS SOME FORM OF ARRANGEMENT OR AGREEMENT REGARDING ANOVEROS MAY HAVE BEEN
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REACHED BETWEEN THE GOVT AND VATICAN DURING MSGR ACERBI'S RECENT VISIT. IT DOES APPEAR THAT GOVT, VATICAN, AND SPANISH EPISCOPATE AT LEAST REACHED AGREEMENT ON ANOVEROS TAKING HIS "VACATION", ALTHOUGH GOVT REPORTEDLY WANTED ANOVEROS TO GO DIRECT FROM MADRID ON VACATION WHILE ANOVEROS AND CHURCH INSISTED ON HIS RETURN TO BILBAO FOR A DAY OR TWO PRIOR TO HIS "VACATION", THUS REPRESENTING A SIGNIFICANT ALTHOUGH SYMBOLIC VICTORY. RUMORS PERSIST ANOVEROS MAY SOME MONTHS HENCE BE TRANSFERRED FROM BILBAO PERHAPS TO NOMINALLY MORE IMPORTANT POST, AS PART OF A POSSIBLE SOLUTION. DEPARTURE OF PAPAL NUNCIO DADAGLIO FROM SPAIN ON

TRANSFER COULD ALSO BE PART OF A SOLUTION WHICH MIGHT PLACATE SOMEWHAT SPANISH GOVT.

7. OUTLOOK FOR CHURCH-STATE RELATIONS IS INCREASINGLY PROBLEMATIC. IT SIGNIFICANT GOVT HAS PULLED BACK FROM ITS EARLIER EXTREME POSITION AND IS NOW APPARENTLY SEEKING SOLUTION TO OVERALL PROBLEM IN FRAMEWORK OF POSSIBLE RENEWED NEGOTIATIONS WITH VATICAN WITH RECOGNIZED ROLE FOR SPANISH EPISCOPATE. THE RECENT TURN TOWARDS MODERATION IN CURRENT CRISIS IS GENERALLY ATTRIBUTED TO DIRECT INTERVENTION BY FRANCO (THE INTERNATIONAL PRESS HAS EVEN SPECULATED ABOUT A POSSIBLE ROLE OF FRANCO'S WIFE) WHILE EARLIER MISHANDLING OF CASE IS GENERALLY BLAMED ON PRIME MINISTER ARIAS AND ON SOME OF HIS MINISTERS. THERE IS STILL WIDE BELIEF SOME MINISTERS MAY LOSE CABINET POSTS SOME MONTHS HENCE AS RESULT THEIR ACTIONS IN THIS CRISIS, OR AS SCAPEGOATS FOR IT.

8. WHAT IS CLEAR IN THIS NEW CHURCH-STATE CRISIS IS THAT, TO DATE AT LEAST, VICTOR HAS BEEN THE CHURCH AND STATE HAS BEEN FORCED TO GIVE GROUND. HOWEVER, THIS IS APT TO HAVE BEEN ONLY ROUND ONE AND THE LAST WORD FROM THE GOVT SIDE HAS PROBABLY NOT YET BEEN HEARD. THE SOMEWHAT MODERATE COURSE WHICH BOTH SIDES AT PRESENT APPEAR TO BE SEEKING, COULD ALSO BE UPSET AT ANY TIME BY A NEW "ANOVEROS" CASE RESPONDING TO IMPRUDENT AND INDIVIDUAL ACTIONS BY ANY ON OF SPAIN'S BISHOPS.
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